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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS, INTER-KOREAN
RELATIONS, TAIWAN'S BID TO JOIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage May 24 on the assassination of a Taipei County councilor Wednesday and on the sentencing of a person involved in a derailment case in southern Taiwan in 2006. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" commented on the U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue. The article called it "an endless strategic race" between Washington and Beijing and said "substantive breakthroughs can hardly be expected."

An editorial in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed inter-Korean relations and urged Taiwan to pay close attention to the political and economic effects in Northeast Asia following the railway link between South and North Korea. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" discussed Taiwan's bid to join international organizations. The article urged the DPP government to continue its current approach -- namely, use the name Taiwan in its bids to join international organizations for the rest of 2007. In addition, the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" carried the translation of a Wednesday editorial in its sister paper, "Liberty Times," translated nearly full-text in yesterday's Media Reaction, which commented on AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young's speech at Taiwan's Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce Monday. End summary.

22. U.S.-China Relations

"U.S.-China Summit"

Columnist Antonio Chiang noted in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (5/24):

"... China's rapid economic growth has been realized at the expense of damage done to its natural and social environment. This is a kind of growth that borrows or plunders [from its environment]. ... The Hu [Jintao]-Wen [Jaibao] rule has long been busy handling [all kinds of problems]. Now that the United States is imposing pressure [on China], these problems will surely grow worse, as China is now under attack simultaneously from within and without. Given the current trend, balanced trade between the two countries can hardly be achieved, even if the growth rates of United States exports were to quadruple. Moreover, Beijing is able to gain control of energy supplies proactively from Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Washington and Beijing are competing against each other from Seoul to Sidney, and the trade imbalance is just part of [their competition]. This is going to be an endless strategic race, and substantive breakthroughs can hardly be expected."

33. Inter-Korean Relations

"Watch out for the Political and Economic Effects Following the Opening of Railway Link between South and North Korea"

"... On Taiwan's part, it needs to pay close attention to the impact

produced by the opening of railway link between South and North Korea on the geo-economics of the entire Northeast Asian region. One must know that the border-crossing by South and North Korean trains has in fact linked together the two vast economies of the Korean Peninsula and China-Russia. ... Once this railway network can be built up effectively, the 'Iron Silk Road,' which existed only on paper, will be coming to life. Traveling [overland] from Pusan, South Korea to the Netherlands' Amsterdam will no longer be possible only in one's imagination. If one tries to look at this situation from the geo-economic perspective, [one will see that] the way people look at the map of Northeast Asia in the future will be totally different from before. ...

"... [A]fter Seoul concluded the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, South Korea's macro-national strategy to join the ASEAN plus three is taking shape, and the development of this railway net has already foretold such ambitions. It's time that Taiwan raised its head and looked up at the changes that have been happening in the outside world while it has been indulging in infighting between the ruling and opposition parties!"

The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (5/24):

14. "Taiwan Must Keep Pressure on PRC"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (5/24):

"... Diplomatic confrontation between Taiwan and the Chinese Communist Party-ruled People's Republic of China is inevitable, not because Taiwan aims to 'make trouble' but because the PRC is attempting to squeeze Taiwan and our 23 million people out of all international organizations and the global society altogether, in order to emphasize its claim that Taiwan is part of the PRC. The

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drive by 'authoritarian China' to render 'democratic Taiwan' invisible in the global community has already put the health of the people of the world at risk by excluding Taiwan from the WHO's defensive net against outbreaks of dangerous diseases. This tactic has reached new depths this week with a drive to further denigrate and restrict Taiwan's participation in the World Organization for Animal and Health (OIE). ...

"Although Taiwan's bid to join the WHO failed in form, the new strategy exposed the violations of the WHO Secretariat made of the organization's own constitution and of the 'Health for All' principle in the course of bowing to Beijing's pressure. At the very least, Taiwan's new appeal challenged the PRC's absurd arbitrariness and arrogance in attempting to dictate to the WHO on how to regulate the activities of another country, and thereby put at risk the health of all the people in the world, as well as violate the human and health rights of Taiwan's people. Besides regaining the moral high ground and restoring our own self-dignity, Taiwan's WHO membership drive did not spark a cross-strait conflict or result in any harm to our parallel efforts to associate with the World Health Assembly as an observer. ... We believe that the DPP government should continue this approach for the rest of 2007, which is both the last full year of Chen's term and the year running up to the Beijing Summer Olympic Games slated for next August. ..."

YOUNG